

## Denies the Charge Of Peonage In the Country

Mexico, D. F., April 2.—From his stock of personal experiences in dealing with Mexican labor, an American mining man recently told me this story. He came to Mexico several years ago to take charge of a mine in which he owned a large interest. He found that the laborers were paid at the rate of 50 cents a day. Being a New Englander, with reminiscences of a year of college settlement work comparatively fresh in his mind, he found it impossible to reconcile his conscience with the fact that human beings directly under his charge were straining their muscles and bowing their backs 10 hours daily, six days in the week, for the equivalent of a quarter of a dollar in United States money.

"What was the result?" Inside of two weeks, instead of having 250 peons working like beavers for six days a week, which was necessary in order to keep the output of the mine up to the mark, I had 250 men working three days a week and loafing four. Even when they worked, they were away below par, because of the after effects of overindulgence in pulque while they were loafing.

"Right there I learned a great lesson! I realized that the harder he was worked and the less he was paid, the better it was for the peon. His wants are few and simple. He will not save his money, if he earns more than he actually needs to support himself and his family. The rest goes in gambling and for intoxicants. My men were better off, and we got more work out of them, at 50 cents a day than on \$1. They reasoned it this way: 'If I can make enough to live on by working three days a week, what is the use of working six?' We went back to the 50 cent basis and had no more trouble."

This story brings clearly into perspective one basic fact which must be reckoned with by anyone who essays an investigation into labor conditions, and

## KNEE TO ANKLE A MASS OF PUDDING

Suffering Simply Indescribable—  
Had to Scratch Till Blood Ran—  
Health Undermined from Lack of  
Sleep—Gave Up Hope but

## CUTICURA FREED HIM FROM SKIN-TORMENT

"About seven years ago a small abrasion appeared on my right leg just above my ankle. It irritated me so that I began to scratch it and it began to spread until my leg from my ankle to the knee was one solid scab. The irritation was always worse at night and would not allow me to sleep, or my wife either, and it was completely undermining our health. I lost fifty pounds of weight, and was almost out of my mind with pain and chagrin as no matter where the irritation came, at work, on the street or in the presence of company, I would have to scratch it until I had the blood running down into my shoe. I simply cannot describe my suffering during those seven years. The pain, mortification, loss of sleep, both to myself and life is simply indescribable on paper and one has to experience it to know what it is."

"I tried all kinds of doctors and remedies but I might as well have thrown my money down a sewer. They would dry it up for a little while and fill me with hope only to break out again just as bad if not worse. I had given up hope of ever being cured when I was induced by my wife to give the Cuticura Remedies a trial. After taking the Cuticura Remedies for a little while I began to see a change and after taking a dozen bottles of Cuticura Resolvent, in conjunction with the Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment, the trouble had entirely disappeared and my leg was as fine as the day I was born. Now after a lapse of six months with no signs of a recurrence I feel perfectly safe in extending to you my heartfelt thanks for the good the Cuticura Remedies have done for me. I shall always recommend them to my friends. W. H. White, 312 E. Cabot St., Philadelphia, Pa., Feb. 4 and Apr. 13, 1909."

Cuticura Remedies are sold throughout the world. Putzer Bros. & Co., Inc., New York, Boston, Mass. 407 Market St., San Francisco, Cal. and the Care and Treatment of the Skin.

## AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK EL PASO, TEXAS

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The American National Bank of El Paso is always interested in young men and desires to see them become successful. We advise every young man who receives and pays out any considerable sum of money to have a Check Account, and we cordially invite him to come in and open an account with us.

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## LABOR IN MEXICO

By Robert H. Murray

### VII "Mexico In Its Centennial Year."

the so-called "peonage system" in Mexico. The Mexican laborer, 299 out of every 1000, possesses within himself none of the ambition or impelling forces which give dignity and fiber to our labor in the United States and makes this element of the population the real backbone of the nation. The Mexican laborer does not work of his own volition or desire, he requires to be driven to it. He works because he must eat. Having striven to the extent whereby his bodily requirements are provided for by the few pesos weekly derived by the sweat of his brow, he declares a truce with work if he is allowed to, and loafs until his pockets are empty, and his stomach grumbles for lack of food. He owns no land. He pays no monthly instalments on a building and loan association to clear the title of a home for himself and his family. He is sending no boys and girls through college. None of the incentives which inspire the American workman to fasten the contents of his pay envelope aside with the Mexican peon. His case presents no individual problem as far as he is concerned, but it brings the planter, the mining superintendent and every man whose prosperity depends upon getting so much work daily out of so many hands face to face with the biggest sort of a problem.

#### Tropic Labor Conditions.

It is particularly toward labor conditions in the tropics of Mexico that of late attention has been drawn by various writers. They have combined to make out an apparently bad case against Mexico on the score of abuse and oppression of labor. It is unquestionable that exaggerated and misrepresents the conditions in the tropics. Half truths and isolated instances have been set up as illustrating conditions which are declared to be general. With as much reason could the recent exposure of peonage cases in Texas and outrageous treatment of prisoners in the convict camps of Georgia be elevated to the dignity of typical examples of labor conditions in the United States.

Peonage, so far as its essential elements go, has an important part in the economical life of Mexico. But peonage is not recognized, sanctioned nor blighted by the Mexican law or the customs of the country. It is not on the side of truth to nominate the term "peonage" as descriptive of the general conditions under which a majority of the laborers in Mexico earn their bread. It must be justly be asserted that it is for the most part a "peonage" that comprehends no involuntary service and entails no injustice upon the laborer. Peonage and the law severed partnership with the passing of Mexico into the domination of Spain. But the principle has survived since, as a characteristic example of the reluctance of the Mexican peon to desert the ways of his forefathers, for those distasteful to an enlightened comprehension of the relations between man and his fellow-men.

#### The Old Spanish Way.

Under the Spanish rule in Mexico, a man could mortgage the labor of his hands to a planter, or a hacendado, as he had paid back the money advanced to him by his employer, and to gain which he signed away his liberty. The law recognized such contracts. It was the care of the planter that the laborer, once in his debt, should never be allowed to get out. Sons were liable for the debts of their fathers, and so a system of virtual slavery was set up. It is a question if the peon suffered materially, or was deprived of any of the comforts or pleasures of life, through the operation of the system. Naturally, subservient, dependent, without ambition or initiative, life to him meant nothing save work, a sufficient amount of food, a few clothes, a shelter for his head, and the intermittent delights of an occasional fiesta. Left to his own devices, lack of the power to properly shape his destiny would probably have condemned him to a hard to mouth existence, with nothing assured and everything precarious. But by placing the responsibility for his food, clothing and shelter upon the planter, he was deprived of any of the material things of life. Telling for his master assured him of returns at least as ample, if not greater, than those which would have accrued to him had he kept his labor free.

#### Imprisonment for Debt.

Modern Mexican law does not countenance imprisonment for debt, or lay upon the peon the necessity of working out the amount of his advance money, should he elect to evade the obligation. If a law could be enacted and rendered effective, whereby the giving of advance money to laborers would be forbidden, what is left of the old peonage system would be dealt a death blow. But the custom of demanding and receiving advance money is so firmly fixed in the peon's scheme of things, that he will engage to work for a stated period on a plantation unless the labor contractor, or the planter, places in his hand a sufficient number of pesos to enable him to enjoy a grand "blow out" before departing for the scene of his labor.

In return for the money advanced, the peon signs a contract. Excepting as a moral force, the contract is not worth the paper upon which it is written. Suppose the laborer owes \$50. He works a week, and decides that he will try to evade the debt. He runs away. The planter can do one of three things. He can let the man go, and charge his account up to profit and loss. He can

pursue him and bring him back to the plantation, not by force, however, but by coercion. If the peon has sufficient interest in the matter to make a stand and defy his creditor, he cannot be forced to return to the plantation.

#### No Law for Peonage.

There is no law upon which the planter can call. The costs of the pursuit are charged up to the runaway. If he is caught and returned, but there is no guarantee that he will not slip away again, and put the planter to extra expense. The third course open for the planter is to proceed under the civil law and obtain a judgment against the peon for what the latter owes him.

This costs money, and the judgment is worthless. The peon is worth what he stands in. In his hat, sandals, cotton shirt and trousers, he has no lands or stock, bonds or jewelry. At all points he has his employer at a disadvantage. Yet, so strong is the influence of custom in Mexico, that year after year, the planter, the mining superintendent and every man whose prosperity depends upon getting so much work daily out of so many hands face to face with the biggest sort of a problem.

#### The Planter's Precaution.

The planter can hardly be blamed for taking such precautions as seem to him to be proper to insure the presence of the peon on his plantation until he has worked out his debt. On most plantations the surveillance to which the peons are subjected is slight. The laborers come from a distance, and the planter places his reliance for the security of his contract laborers upon the difficulties that beset a penniless fugitive on a long tramp through a densely jungled, thinly populated country. Besides, he takes a degree of "gumption" to essay a flight, and the peon has not a suspicion of his making-up.

But with the "enganchado" labor difficult tactics are pursued. Generally speaking, "enganchados" are the off-scourings of the cities and towns, drunks, broken men, thieves, idlers, the raffish, who are gathered together by labor contractors and shipped in squads to the tropics, where labor is urgently needed.

#### The Labor Contractor.

A planter is unable to get together enough men to work his crop. In his desperation—for a planter must be hard pressed who is willing to take on "enganchados"—he engages a labor contractor to send him 50, 60 or 100 men. The contractor accepts no responsibility for quality. He gets so much per man, and the rest of the matter is left to him. He is a man who takes no interest in the thing that walks on legs is sent to the contractor. If he is short a few men to complete a squad, he will sell forth to the prisoners, pay the fines of pickpockets of petty thieves, get their names on a contract and ship them to the plantations.

#### Inefficient Labor.

Enganchado labor is the worst and least efficient in the country. Most of the enganchados are city men, who have never had a machete or an agricultural implement in their hands. They are the veriest greenhorns on a plantation. The bulk of them are lazy. Manifestly it is the interest of the planter, in dealing not only with the greenhorns, but with the city men, to feed them well, and to make them as contented as possible. A well fed, contented man is an asset, for he will work. But if he is starved or ill-treated, his earnings are reduced, and he is lessened. It must be remembered that all classes of labor in Mexico are assets only so long as they can or will do their tasks.

English considerations, alone, in the absence of any higher or more humane motive, would impel the planter to handle his men so as to get the most labor possible out of them. For this reason it is fair to assume that reported instances of peons or enganchados having been starved or beaten to death by brutal masters are exceptional. I have visited plantations where both ordinary contract labor—peons—and enganchados were employed side by side.

On each place there was a white washed hut, with a barred window, which served the purposes of a jail. If a peon or enganchado refused to work, or made trouble, he was promptly locked up and fed on human excrement for a day or two. The jefe politico kept a sharp eye on the plantations and upon the labor. They are prompt to investigate and set in motion the machinery of the law to punish planters or overseers who mistreat laborers.

#### Holding "Contract Laborers."

An American planter—by the way, he is one of the very few Americans in the Mexican tropics—has adopted a method devised by him whereby he put a stop to escapes among his contract laborers. Incidentally, this case illustrates how keenly the Mexican authorities look after the legal rights of the peons who contract themselves to planters. This man conceived the notion of incorporating in the printed form of contract which the law specifies shall

#### A NOTRE DAME LADY'S APPEAL

To all knowing sufferers of rheumatism, whether muscular or of the joints, sciatica, lumbago, backache, pains in the kidneys or neuralgia, pains, on write to her for a home treatment which has repeatedly cured all of these troubles. She feels it her duty to cure all her sufferers FREE. You cure yourself at home as the invalids will testify—no change of climate being necessary. This simple discovery banishes uric acid from the blood, loosens the stiffened joints, purifies the blood, and brightens the eyes, giving elasticity and tone to the whole system. If the above interests you for proof address Mrs. M. Summers, Box R, Notre Dame, Ind.

be executed between the laborer and the planter, a clause by which all of his employees should become jointly responsible for the debts of runaways.

If a man fled, owing money to the planter, 25 percent was charged to the overseer, 10 percent to the foreman of the squad to which the runaway belonged, and the remainder to the rest of the laborers in the man's squad. The jefe politico in the city withheld the planter's permit to recruit his field force, objected to the clause, on the score that it was not used to keep laborers, and the planter argued that the effect of his plan would be to place upon the laborers that in which they were woefully lacking, namely, a sense of responsibility; that it would tend to make honest men of them, instead of encouraging them to shirk their lawful debts, and become fugitives. The jefe saw the point and withdrew his objections.

#### How the Plan Worked.

"That was the way," said the planter, "and not a man has run away from my place since. The men watch each other. If a man is planning to escape, his companions know it. Formerly they kept quiet and let him go. Now, in order to save themselves money, they watch each other, and if a man shows an indication of leaving before his account is worked out, they warn him to desert, and keep an eye upon the suspect. The result is that every laborer leaves my place an honest man, with his debt worked out and a receipt in full in his hand. Some of them stay on, and others take pride in the fact that they are free men, that they owe nothing."

Planters complain that labor conditions in the tropics are demoralized. With scanty pay they place the blame upon the American plantation companies and their American managers. Labor in the tropics used to be cheaper, and more efficient, at 18, 25 and 50 cents a day. The Americans came, taking up huge tracts of land. Most of the American companies were stock selling enterprises. They sold millions of dollars worth of stock, on the installment plan, and thus amply equipped with funds, began to work big country. Unfortunately, the management of a majority of these stock company plantations was wasteful, inefficient and often downright dishonest. They wanted labor and were willing to pay almost any price for it. They bought wages, and held before the peons the lures of \$1 and \$1.25 a day, with better food than they had ever eaten before in their lives.

#### Mistaken Idea of Laziness.

Coupled with this pampering of the peons was a mistaken idea of laziness, so far as long hours of toil and a maximum of exertion was concerned. They spent the peons' money in a hard-ship upon the planters who were trying to struggle along on small capital, and to economize, for they were obliged to compete with the wealthy and extravagant managed companies in order to obtain help. They had no other means of money and shut down, leaving their stockholders wailing and, only too rarely, the rascals who plundered the treasuries in jail, much labor was

## INTRODUCING A CITY TO ITSELF

How "Boston-1915" Has Secured the Cooperation of  
Business, Social, Civic and Industrial Organi-  
zations in Working for a Better City.

(By Lewis E. Palmer.)

It's a big job to introduce a city to itself and it's a certain fact that most American city dwellers are not very well informed about their own resources and opportunities. The expression "this is an age of specialization" is pretty well worn out, but its truth is more apparent today than ever. The average business man knows his chamber of commerce and board of trade, the laboring man's viewpoint is often limited to his trade union, the social worker often finds a panacea in his particular brand of reform, and the minister sometimes finds difficulty in reaching out beyond his church walls. The trouble is that none of them is well enough informed about his city as a working whole. Each one needs an introduction to his own city's resources—Industrial, commercial, social and civic.

That was the idea of a group of prominent Boston business men when about a year ago, they started a "Boston-1915" movement—a cooperative plan to get the entire community working together for a better all round city. To be of interest to every American city and town looking to future growth and development.

#### On a Broad Basis.

From the beginning, it was the plan to put the movement on a broad, representative basis. It was to be more than a group of business men, but a group of representatives of all the various interests. Conferences of these various agencies were called and each section elected a stipulated number of directors. In addition to the special groups, the shareholders of Boston-1915 have a dollar a piece elective five directors to represent Boston and five to represent the suburbs. So at the time of first meeting the complete directorate numbered 85 men and women who will from now on manage the movement.

The classified groups represented are: Business organizations, charities and correction, education, health, labor organizations, neighborhood welfare, religious organizations, art, music and drama, civic organizations, city planning and housing, cooperative associations, women's clubs, and organizations working with youths. The Boston-1915 exposition—a graphic means of introducing a city to itself—was held during November and was twice extended finally to the middle of December. In six weeks, there was an attendance of nearly 200,000 people. The school committee and the vocational bureau were brought together, with the result that vocational direction is established in the schools. Cooperation was secured between business houses, labor unions and public service bodies in assisting the Y. M. C. A. to establish a part time engineering school. A series of school boy games were held during the sum-

released. But high wages and too lenient treatment had had their effect upon the peons.

"After a year on one of these get-rich-quick plantations they weren't worth their salt," complained an American who is honestly trying to solve the labor problem in the tropics and protect the interests of the stockholders in his company. "They were spoiled and they wouldn't buckle down and work, and they were not satisfied with a fair, legitimate wage. Conditions will readjust themselves in time, but meanwhile we have to suffer."

#### Criticism of System.

Both in theory and practice the labor situation in Mexico may be criticized adversely. But when one takes into consideration every fact bearing upon the situation, the prime necessity of utilizing to the utmost such labor as the country contains, the temperamental defects of the peons, their innate inclination for acquiescence in paternalistic rule, and their discouraging state of contentment with things as they are, it is difficult to see how another system could successfully be introduced. If laws were enacted today, prohibiting labor contractors and forbidding planters and contractors from advancing money to secure the labor of men, their enforcement would reduce the supply and efficiency of labor in the republic by at least 50 percent. And the general condition of the laboring classes would not be improved in the slightest degree.

#### Labor Supply Sufficient.

Generally speaking the supply of labor in Mexico has thus far been found sufficient to keep pace with the progress and development of the country. At present there seems to have been struck about an equal balance between demand and supply. The conditions are problematical. But it seems reasonable to assume that, with the awakening of interest in agricultural enterprises, the bringing of immense tracts of land under cultivation through the prosecution of the irrigation projects fostered by the government, the opening of new mines and the organization of all sorts of industrial ventures, the time is fast approaching when labor will be in such demand that it will be difficult to obtain. Immigration of the right kind offers a possible solution for meeting the conditions that impend. Efforts at bringing contract labor to Mexico have, as a rule, not proved successful. Chinese, Japanese and Italians have been tried. Usually the men imported have been of an undesirable sort, the ragtag and bobtail element from the cities, unused to manual labor and without ambition or purpose. Successful farmers or steady reliable workers are apt to prosper and be contented in their own countries.

#### No Incentive to Emigrate.

This being so, they have no incentive to press their fortunes in an unknown land. White labor the sturdy, industrious German, Russian, Pole, Hungarian or Hollander, such as passes through Ellis Island, the thousands see nothing in Mexico at present to attract him. Wages are higher in the United States and also in the Argentine, to which latter country European immigration recently has trended in great volume. The European laborer, no matter how frugal he may be, cannot compete with the ambitious peon who is satisfied with 75 cents silver a day, or less. The kind of work he does, however, is not the same. The peon here until wages are raised, or the government adopts some sort of a policy of encouragement for European pioneers to settle in the country, is going to good prospects of winning farms and homes for themselves as are presented in the United States, Canada or the Argentine.

Next article—Agriculture.

## Four Blind People Have Been Restored to Sight— One Man, One Lady and a Girl and Boy at the Dr. A. T. Still Osteo- pathic Infirmary, Dr. Ira W. Collins Physician in Chief.

## The Girl Was Pronounced Hopeless by the Entire Med- ical Association of Texas When They Met Here in El Paso.

## The Boy Had Been Doctored by Six- teen Specialists in El Paso and Different Cities.

They Were Cured by Loosening the Following Vertebrae.

How Many Drops of Poisonous Drugs Taken Three Times  
a Day After and Before Eating Could Have  
Ever Pushed Those Vertebrae Back?

It All Goes To Show That These Medical Guessers Don't  
Know Any More About Diseases, Than a Hog  
Does About Keeping the Sabbath.

Don't let these medical guessers scare you into an operation, for it shows they don't know what is the matter with you. They only want your money. Osteopathy cured 6000, only lost six, while poisonous drugs and the knife has laid out six thousand in the same length of time. Don't it make you shudder that any set of human beings would be so avaricious? The law ought to stop it. If osteopathy or any other kind of harmless way of treating diseases had a record like that they would have had them all in the penitentiary long ago.

Largest Run in Its History.

to have the nerves freed to the lungs just the same as these blind people did to their eyes.  
It is the same in heart diseases, which are being cured every day.  
They are congested at the spine and heart weakened by it.  
Also, they do not know how to free the ribs in Asthma so the air can be expelled from the lungs and cause a vacuum to draw fresh air in.  
That is why the Still Osteopathic Infirmary is curing them every day, while drug doctors are helpless.  
In Neuralgia and all kinds of headaches we loosen the nerve so it can cause circulation of blood and feed the nerve and you are well again.  
Droves of them have been cured here in El Paso of stomach troubles and liver troubles, and indigestion.  
Free the nerves and the circulation starts up and you are yourself again.  
Rheumatism is only a congested nerve to some of the muscles.  
I have never seen a case of any kind of rheumatism that was incurable by Osteopathy, and we have more cases, I suppose, than all the rest of the city.  
In BRIGHT'S DISEASE, we free the nerves to kidneys and that is why, when we restore them to normal, they carry all the waste out of the system, and you are well again, and because the nerve was pressed on, and weakened had more poison to carry off than it was able to so you cannot cure by putting in more poison and whipping up the already overworked nerves.  
—FOR IT ALL GOES TO SHOW YOU CANNOT POISON A MAN AND CURE HIM OF ANY KIND OF DISEASE.  
FOR NO AMOUNT OF POISONS WILL PUSH ONE OF THESE VERTEBRAE BACK IN PLACE.  
It may stimulate you for the time, but will make your spine congest worse, and you will be worse the next time the stagnant blood accumulates in that organ.  
DON'T SAY I DON'T SEE HOW AN OSTEOPATH COULD CURE ME JUST COME OVER AND SEE HOW WE DO IT.  
WE'RE FROM MISSOURI, AND WE'LL SHOW YOU JUST HOW WE CURED SIX THOUSAND CASES AND ONLY LOST SIX, WHILE THE PROFESSIONAL POISONERS LAID OUT SIX THOUSAND IN THE SAME LENGTH OF TIME.  
FEEL YOUR OWN SPINE—THE TROUBLE IS THERE.  
You can have no disease without the accumulating of stagnant blood, which is caused by the nerve deadening at the spine.  
DR. A. T. STILL, OSTEOPATHIC INFIRMARY.  
DR. IRA W. COLLINS, PHYSICIAN IN CHIEF.  
EL PASO, TEXAS.

Boy who had been to 16 specialists.  
Blind for 5 years. Resides 1205 Wyoming St., El Paso, Texas.

Man who has been blind for one year.  
402 S. Stanton St., El Paso, Texas.

Woman who had been blind for several months. 519 South Stanton St., El Paso, Texas.

Blind girl, six years. Lakota Flats, on Mesa Ave., El Paso, Texas.

Blind girl who had been pronounced hopeless by entire Medical Association of Texas, when they met here in El Paso. This was, of course, hopeless to them, for they did not know how to push these vertebrae back so as to loosen the nerves which were deadened to the eyes, and it all goes to show that they did not know how to free the nerves to the lungs in a case of pneumonia or consumption, and they have